DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
DEPARTEMENT VAN HANDEL EN NYWERHEID

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA   REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

LETTERS PATENT
(PATENTS ACT, 1978)

PATENTBRIEF
(WET OP PATENTE, 1978)

No. ....98/03158..........

WHEREAS
NADEMAAL.......... ACRES GAMING, INC. ....

(Hereinafter called "the Patentee")
(Hieronder "die Patenthouer" genoem)

has applied to me for the grant of a patent in respect of an invention described and claimed in the complete specification
aansoek by my gedoen het om die verlening van 'n patent ten opsigte van 'n uitvinding wat beskryf is en waarop aanspraak

deposited at the Patent Office under the above-mentioned number, a copy of which is annexed, together with the relevant
gemaak word in die volledige spesifikasie wat by die Pantentkantoor onder bovermelde nommer ingedien is en waarvan 'n

Form P. 2;
afskrif aangeheg is tesame met die betrokke Vorm P. 2;

NOW THEREFORE these Letters Patent are to grant to the Patentee a patent, the effect of which shall be to grant to the
SO IS DIT dat hierdie Patentbrief aan die Patenthouer 'n patent verleen wat die uitwerking het dat, behoudens die

Patentee in the Republic, subject to the provisions of the Act, for the duration of the patent, the right to exclude other persons
bepalings van die Wet, aan die Patenthouer vir die duur van die patent in die Republiek die reg verleen word om ander

from making, using, exercising or disposing of the invention, so that he shall have and enjoy the whole profit and advantage
persone uit te sluit van die vervaardiging, aanwending, uitoefening of van die handsetting van die uitvinding, sodat hy al die

accruing by reason of the invention.
wins en voordeel wat uit die uitvinding voortspruit, verkry en geniet.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the seal of the Patent Office has been affixed at Pretoria with effect from the
TER BETUIGING WAARVAN die seël van die Patentkantoor hierop te Pretoria aangebring is met ingang van die

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Registrar of Patents • Registrateur van Patente

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CLAIMS

1.   A method for controlling a bonusing promotion system using a bonus server interconnected to a plurality of gaming devices, comprising the steps of:

accumulating a percentage of a wager played on each gaming device into a bonus pool stored on the bonus server;

comparing the bonus pool to a threshold value stored on the bonus server each time the bonus pool changes;

selecting one of the gaming devices when the threshold value is substantially met; and

awarding a bonus prize funded by the bonus pool to the selected gaming device.

2.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of accumulating further comprises the steps of:

recording the wager on a meter on each gaming device;

receiving a meter reading on the bonus server from the meter on each gaming device;

comparing the meter reading to a meter reading previously received from the gaming device to form a delta value; and

determining the percentage of the wager based on the delta value for each gaming device and adding the percentage to the bonus pool.

3.   A method according to claim 2, wherein the step of receiving a meter reading further comprises the step of:

receiving the meter reading from each of the gaming devices at substantially regular time intervals.

4.   A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of selecting one of the gaming devices further comprises the steps of:

choosing one of the gaming devices at random.

5.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

accumulating a further percentage of a wager played on each gaming device into a hidden bonus pool stored on the bonus server.

6.   A method according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

dividing the hidden bonus pool into a plurality of consolation prizes; and

awarding the consolation prizes to the gaming devices other than the selected gaming device.

7.   A method according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

rolling the hidden pool over into the bonus pool after the step of awarding.

8.   A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

generating an anticipation message after the step of comparing when the bonus pool is within a predetermined count from the threshold value, the predetermined count representing a number of wagers required by the bonus pool to substantially meet the threshold value.

9.   A method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:

generating an award message for receipt by the gaming devices after the step of generating an anticipation message.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the step of generating an award message further comprises the steps of:

locking the gaming devices from further game play;

providing a visual indicator on the gaming devices; and

providing an audible indicator on the gaming devices.

11. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

sending a win message to a bank controller interposed between the bonus server and the gaming devices.

12. A method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of:

activating a visual display on the bank controller responsive to receipt of the win message.

13. A method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of:

activating a sound bank on the bank controller responsive to receipt of the win message.

14. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

monitoring wagering activity frequency on each gaming device; and

selecting those of the gaming devices with such a wagering activity frequency exceeding a predefined frequency as eligible to win the bonus prize.

15. A method for controlling a bonusing promotion system using a bonus server interconnected to a plurality of gaming devices substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying diagrams.

16. A method of operating gaming devices interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:

permitting players to play the gaming devices;

paying to each device in accordance with a pay table stored in the device;

selecting one of the gaming devices for a bonus;

indicating to the player of the selected device that the device is selected; and

paying the bonus at the device responsive to a player-generated input to the gaming device.

17.   The method of claim 16 wherein said method further includes:

establishing a predetermined minimum level of gaming device play;

detecting wagers made at each of the gaming devices;

initiating a bonus period during which gaming devices that exceed the minimum level are eligible to be paid the bonus and gaming devices which do not exceed the minimum level are not eligible for the bonus.

18.   The method of claim 16 wherein initiating a bonus period comprises transmitting a command over the network to the gaming devices.

19.   The method of claim 16 wherein said method further comprises:

using the network to track the amount of money played on the selected gaming devices; and

allocating a predetermined percentage played to a bonus pool.

20.   The method of claim 19 wherein the bonus period is initiated after the bonus pool exceeds a predetermined level.

21.   The method of claim 16 wherein indicating to the player of the selected device that the device is selected comprises transmitting a pay command from the host computer over the network.

22.   The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:

storing data defining the predetermined minimum level of gaming device play in a memory at the gaming device; and

comparing the level of gaming device play with the stored data.

23. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further includes indicating to a player of the gaming device whether or not the gaming device is eligible to be paid a bonus.

24. The method of claim 16 wherein said method further comprises paying a substantial award to a different one of the gaming devices prior to selecting one of the gaming devices for a bonus award.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein after paying a substantial award to one of the gaming devices said method further includes:

selecting a plurality of the gaming devices for a bonus;

indicating to the players of the selected devices that the devices are selected; and

paying the bonus at the devices responsive to a player-generated input to each gaming device.

26. The method of claim 17 wherein said method further comprises paying a substantial award to a different one of the gaming devices prior to selecting one of the gaming devices for a bonus award.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said method further comprises:

selecting each of the eligible gaming devices for a bonus;

indicating to the players of the selected devices that the devices are selected; and

paying the bonus at the devices responsive to a player-generated input to each gaming device.

28.   A method of providing incentive to play gaming devices connected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating a player account accessible by the host computer;

accruing points in the player account related to the level of player play on the gaming devices;

providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;

converting points in the player account to a credit responsive to a conversion command initiated by the player at said one gaming device; and

permitting the player to wager the credit on the gaming device.

29.   The method of claim 28 wherein converting points in the player account to a credit comprises converting points in the player account to a credit in the player account, and wherein permitting the player to wager the credit on the gaming device comprises permitting the player to wager credit from the account on the gaming device.

30.   The method of claim 29 wherein permitting the player to wager credit from the account on the gaming device comprises:

debiting the account; and

crediting said one gaming device responsive to debiting the account.

31.   The method of claim 30 wherein crediting said one gaming device responsive to debiting the account comprises crediting a credit meter associated with the gaming device in the amount of the wager.

32.   The method of claim 29 wherein said method further comprises converting credit in the player account back to points in the player account.

33.   The method of claim 28 wherein said method further includes storing the player account in a memory associated with the gaming device.

34.   The method of claim 33 wherein said memory comprises a random access memory located at said gaming device and wherein said method further comprises storing the player account in the memory responsive to the command initiated by the player.

35.   The method of claim 28 wherein the command initiated by the player comprises accessing a player tracking account associated with the player.

36.   The method of claim 35 wherein accessing a player tracking account associated with the player comprises inserting a player-tracking card associated with the player in to a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

37.   The method of claim 28 wherein the conversion command initiated by the player comprises actuating a switch associated with said one gaming device.

38.   A method of providing incentive to play gaming devices connected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating a player account accessible by the host computer;

tracking the level of gaming-device play of a player associated with the account;

applying credit to the player account when the level of play exceeds a predetermined level;

preventing the player from wagering the credit on any of the gaming devices until after a predetermined time; and

permitting the player to wager the credit on one of the gaming devices after the predetermined time.

39.   The method of claim 38 wherein said method further comprises providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices.

40.   The method of claim 39 wherein the command initiated by the player comprises accessing a player tracking account associated with the player.

41.   The method of claim 40 wherein accessing a player tracking account associated with the player comprises inserting a player-tracking card associated with the player in to a card reader associated with said one gaming device.

42.   The method of claim 38 wherein said method further includes storing the player account in a memory associated with the gaming device.

43.   The method of claim 42 wherein said memory comprises a random access memory located at said gaming device and wherein said method further comprises storing the player account in the memory responsive to the command initiated by the player.

44.   The method of claim 38 wherein tracking the level of gaming-device play of a player associated with the account comprises accruing points in the player account.

45.   The method of claim 44 wherein said method further comprises displaying the number of points required for the level of play to exceed a predetermined level.

46.   The method of claim 38 wherein said method further comprises displaying an indication that the credit is applied to the player account.

47.   The method of claim 46 wherein said method further comprises displaying the predetermined time after which the credit is available to be wagered.

48.   The method of claim 38 wherein said method further comprises displaying the credit after the predetermined time.

49.   The method of claim 48 wherein said method further comprises:
        debiting the displayed credit responsive to a wager made by the player; and
        applying the amount debited to a credit meter associated with the gaming device.

50.   The method of claim 49 wherein the amount debited is proportional to the amount wagered.

51.   A method of operating gaming devices interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:
        establishing a predetermined minimum frequency of gaming device play;
        detecting wagers made at each of the gaming devices; and
        initiating a bonus period during which gaming devices that exceed the minimum frequency of play are eligible to be paid a bonus responsive to the occurrence of a predetermined event and gaming devices that do not exceed the minimum frequency of play are not eligible for such a bonus.

52.   The method of claim 51 wherein said method further comprises
        creating a player account accessible by the host computer;
        providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at said one gaming device; and
        determining whether the command is valid.

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53.   The method of claim 52 wherein said method further includes indicating to the player whether or not the gaming device is eligible to be paid a bonus.

54.   The method of claim 53 wherein indicating to the player whether or not the gaming device is eligible to be paid a bonus comprises actuating a light visible to the player.

55.   The method of claim 52 wherein said method further comprises applying a first criterion for paying the bonus to a player providing a valid command and a second criterion for paying the bonus to a player who does not provide a valid command.

56.   The method of claim 52 wherein said method further comprises applying a first criterion for paying the bonus to a named player and a second criterion for paying the bonus to an anonymous player.

57.   The method of claim 51 wherein initiating a bonus period comprises transmitting a command over the network to the gaming devices.

58.   The method of claim 51 wherein said method further comprises:
        using the network to track the amount of money played on the selected gaming devices; and
            allocating a predetermined percentage played to a bonus pool.

59.   The method of claim 58 wherein the bonus period is initiated after the bonus pool exceeds a predetermined level.

60.   The method of claim 51 wherein the predetermined event comprises a jackpot paid at one of the gaming devices.

61.   The method of claim 51 wherein the predetermined event comprises random selection of one of the gaming devices.

62.   The method of claim 51 wherein said method further comprises paying a bonus to a gaming device responsive to a pay command transmitted from the host computer over the network.

63.   The method of claim 51 wherein said method further comprises:
          storing data defining the predetermined minimum level of gaming device play in a memory at the gaming device; and
          comparing the level of gaming device play with the stored data.

DATED THIS 15th DAY APRIL 1998

SPOOR AND FISHER
APPLICANTS PATENT ATTORNEYS

AMENDED THIS 21st DAY OF DECEMBER 1998

C. du Ville.

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